

M.E. Smith Building
201 South 10th Street
Omaha
Douglas County
Nebraska

HABS No. NE-35

HABS
NEB,
28-OMAH,
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

M.E. SMITH BUILDING

HABS No. ^{NE} NB-35HABS
NEB,
28-OMAH
3-1

Location: 201 South 10th Street, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.

Present Owner: City of Omaha, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68183.

Present Use: Demolished.

Significance: Built in 1919-20, the M.E. Smith Building is significant as an unusually well-designed industrial structure in which new structural advancements and architectural styling were used to produce a better-lighted, safer structure. Its association with M.E. Smith and Company, a very important dry goods firm in the area, contribute to its significance as do the health and child care facilities provided in it which demonstrate an important, early interest in employee welfare.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1919-1920.
2. Architect: Frederick S. Stott. From 1920 to 1930 Stott designed several buildings in Omaha in addition to the Smith Building. His most notable work is St. John's A.M.E. Church (1920), a Prairie style structure.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a list of past property owners of M.E. Smith Building. Source of these records is Douglas County Recorder's Office.

Book 9 Deed Book

Lot 3, Block 124, City of Omaha

Grantor	Grantee	Date of Instrument	Character of Instrument
R. H. McCormick et al	Catherine B. Nash	June 2, 1906	WD
Cyrus H. McCormick Jr.	Catherine B. Nash	March 31, 1906	WD
Nettie F. McCormick et al	Catherine B. Nash	March 31, 1906	WD
Catherine B. Nash	The C. B. Nash Co.	Jan. 23, 1907	WD
C.B. Nash Co.	M.E. Smith Bldg. Co.	Aug. 1, 1919	WD
C.B. Nash Co.	Burgess Nash Bldg. Co.	Dec. 26, 1928	WD
M.E. Smith Bldg. Co.	Maxwell W. Bernstein	Dec. 31, 1941	WD
E.W. Nash Bldg. Co.	Major Realty Co.	May 31, 1946	WD
Major Realty Co.	Rose Cohen	Sept. 29, 1951	CWD
Rose Cohen	Ninth St. Realty Co.	Oct. 3, 1951	WD

Ninth St. Realty Co.	Mathur Inc.	Feb. 10, 1954	CWD
Mathur Inc.	Omat Company	Nov. 15, 1956	CWD
Omat Company	Brandeis Investment Co.	Sept. 3, 1964	WD
Brandeis Investment Co.	Pendleton Woolen Mills	Oct. 20, 1964	CWD
Brandeis Investment Co.	Andrew C. Nelson Etal	Sept. 13, 1965	CWD
Andrew C. Nelson	Omaha National Bank (Tax)	June 20, 1974	WD
City of Omaha	Pendleton Woolen Mills	July 11, 1977	Ret. of Appraise
City of Omaha	Omaha National Bank Tr. etal	July 11, 1977	Ret. of Appraise

Lot 4, Block 124, City of Omaha

Grantor	Grantee	Date of Instrument	Character of Instrument
City of Omaha	Byron Reed Co.	Apr. 29, 1913	WD
Abraham L. Reed Ex	C.B. Nash Co.	Nov. 3, 1913	Deed
Byron Reed Co.	C.B. Nash Co.	Nov. 3, 1913	WD
C.B. Nash Co.	M.E. Smith Bldg. Co.	Aug. 1, 1919	WD
M.E. Smith Bldg. Co.	Maxwell W. Bernstein	Dec. 31, 1941	WD
Brandeis Invst. Co.	Andrew C. Nelson Etal	Sept. 13, 1965	CWD
Andrew C. Nelson	Omaha National Bank	June 20, 1974	WD
City of Omaha	Omaha National Bank Tr. etal	July 11, 1977	Ret. of Appraise

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: James Stewart and Company, Inc; Sanitary Plumbing Company; Otis Elevator.

5. Original plans and construction: Since all three buildings were built as a commercial complex of M.E. Smith Manufacturing Company, the Smith Building was designed to blend architecturally with the older Nash Buildings (HABS No. NB-36). Its scale and massing match that of the older buildings.

Original architectural drawings of the building are available for purposes of further study at the Permits and Inspection Division of the City of Omaha. See Supplemental Material, Sources of Information section, for xerox copies of some of the drawings.

6. Alterations and additions: Interior alterations were done to the building in 1926-1927. L. J. Erickson and sons was the contractor.

B. Historical Context: The M.E. Smith Building is associated with the M.E. Smith Dry Goods Company, which by the turn of the century was the largest and most important wholesale dry goods firm in Omaha. The company was organized in 1870 in Council Bluffs and moved to Omaha in the 1880s, headquartered in the Ames Block. Having been highly successful in the wholesale dry goods business, the company later entered into the manufacture of clothing.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This building is a significant example of a well-designed industrial structure of the 1920s featuring recent structural developments from that period. The exterior implies the interior structural system with large expanses of industrial sash set between slender piers and narrow brick spandrels.
2. Condition of fabric: The building was in good condition at the time of its demolition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The square, 10-story building measures 132'x 132'. The north elevation has four bays and the west elevation has six bays.
2. Foundation: Reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: Dark brown brick walls with a curtain wall.
4. Structural system, framing: Reinforced concrete frame, floors and roof.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Two-story entry with two doors at 10th Street.
 - b. Windows: Large industrial sash windows throughout.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat, built-up roof. Tenth story is set back one bay from the west facade allowing the roof of the ninth floor to become an outdoor terrace.
 - b. Cornice: A corbeled, arcuated cornice projects from the brick wall between the eighth and ninth floors.

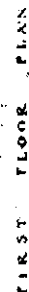
C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Floors one through nine are all similar with approximately 22 x 25 foot open bays, with a stair and elevator core near the southeast corner. The tenth floor is a large, column free space approximately 50 x 130 feet, opening onto an adjacent roof space.

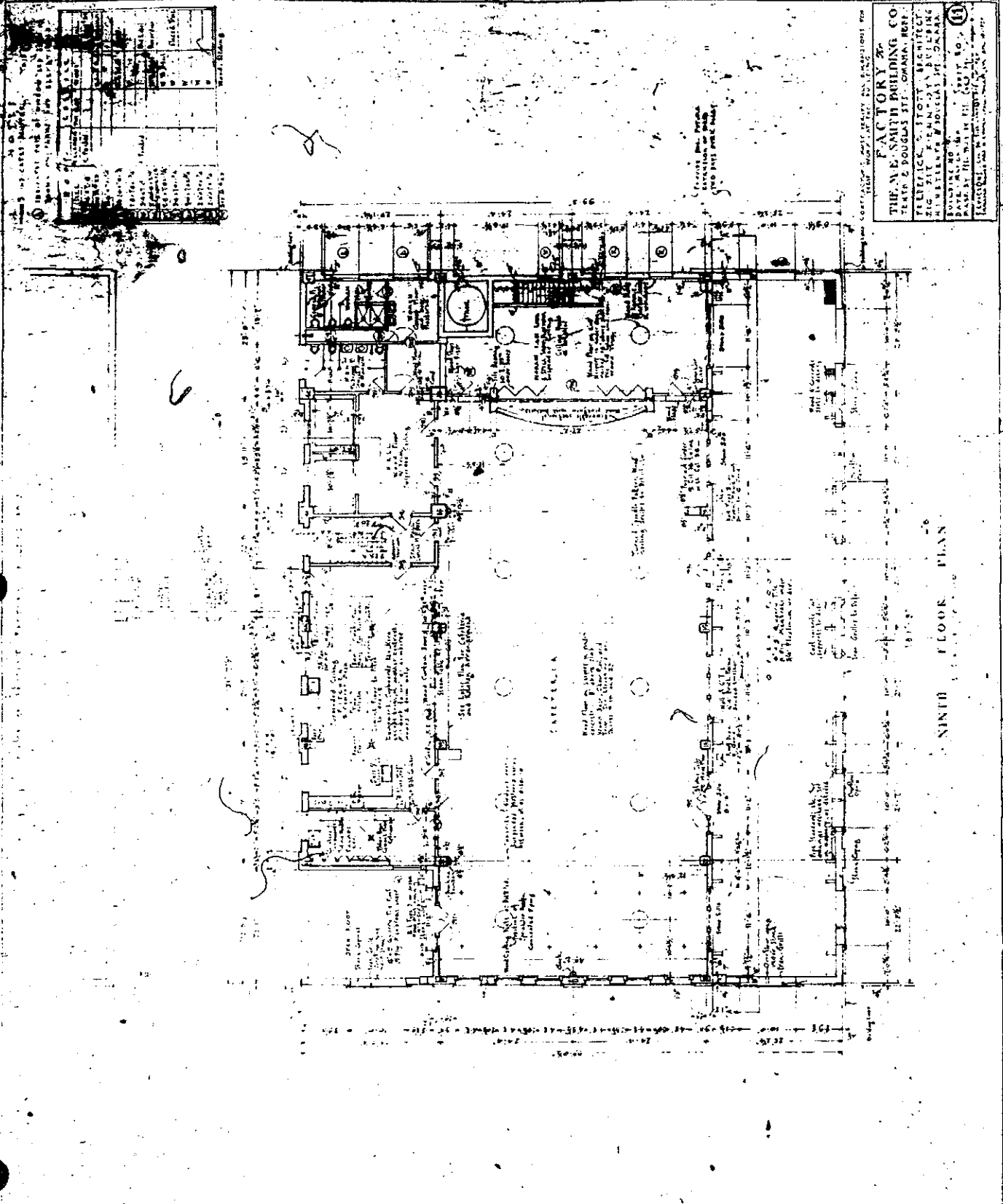
2. Stairways: Reinforced concrete.
 3. Flooring: Reinforced concrete.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Reinforced concrete.
 5. Doors: Metal fire doors.
 6. Mechanical equipment: The building was designed and equipped with the latest fire safety techniques in mind including brick enclosed stairways and elevators, standard fire doors, standpipes, and automatic sprinkler system.
- D. Site: The building is located in Omaha's major light industrial and warehouse district which runs between 8th and 10th from Douglas and Jackson Streets.

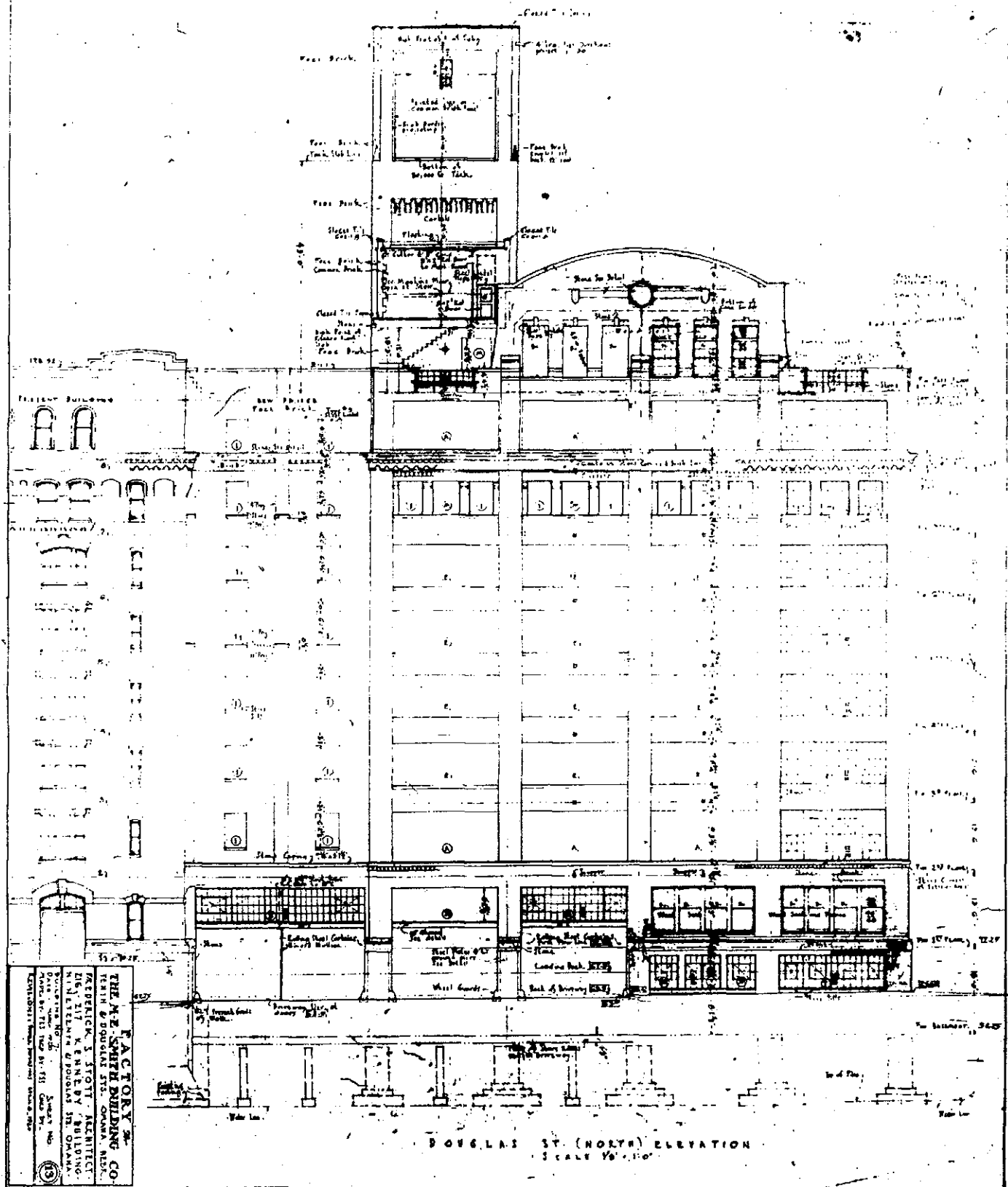
PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Drawings of the M.E. Smith Building on microfilm are at the Permits and Inspection Division, Housing and Community Development Department, City of Omaha, Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, 4th floor, Omaha, Nebraska, 68183 Roll No. 12, Permit No. 777, June 1, 1920. See also Supplemental Material.
- B. Bibliography:
- Property transfer records, Douglas County Recorder of Deeds.
- State Historic Preservation Office Report by the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1500 R Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508. March 24, 1978.
- C. Supplemental Material: See attached.

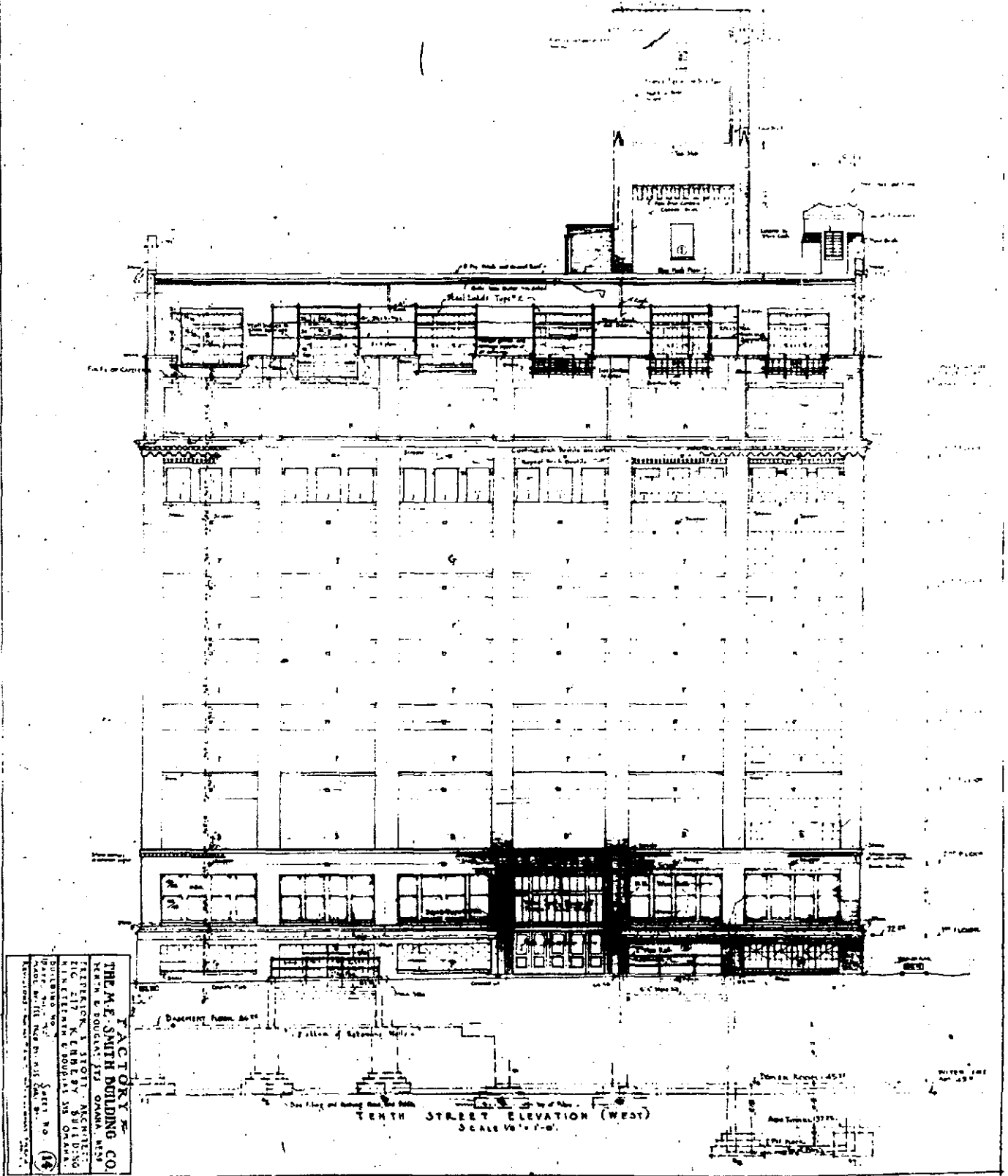


FIRST FLOOR PLAN COURTESY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT., CITY OF OMAHA, NEB.

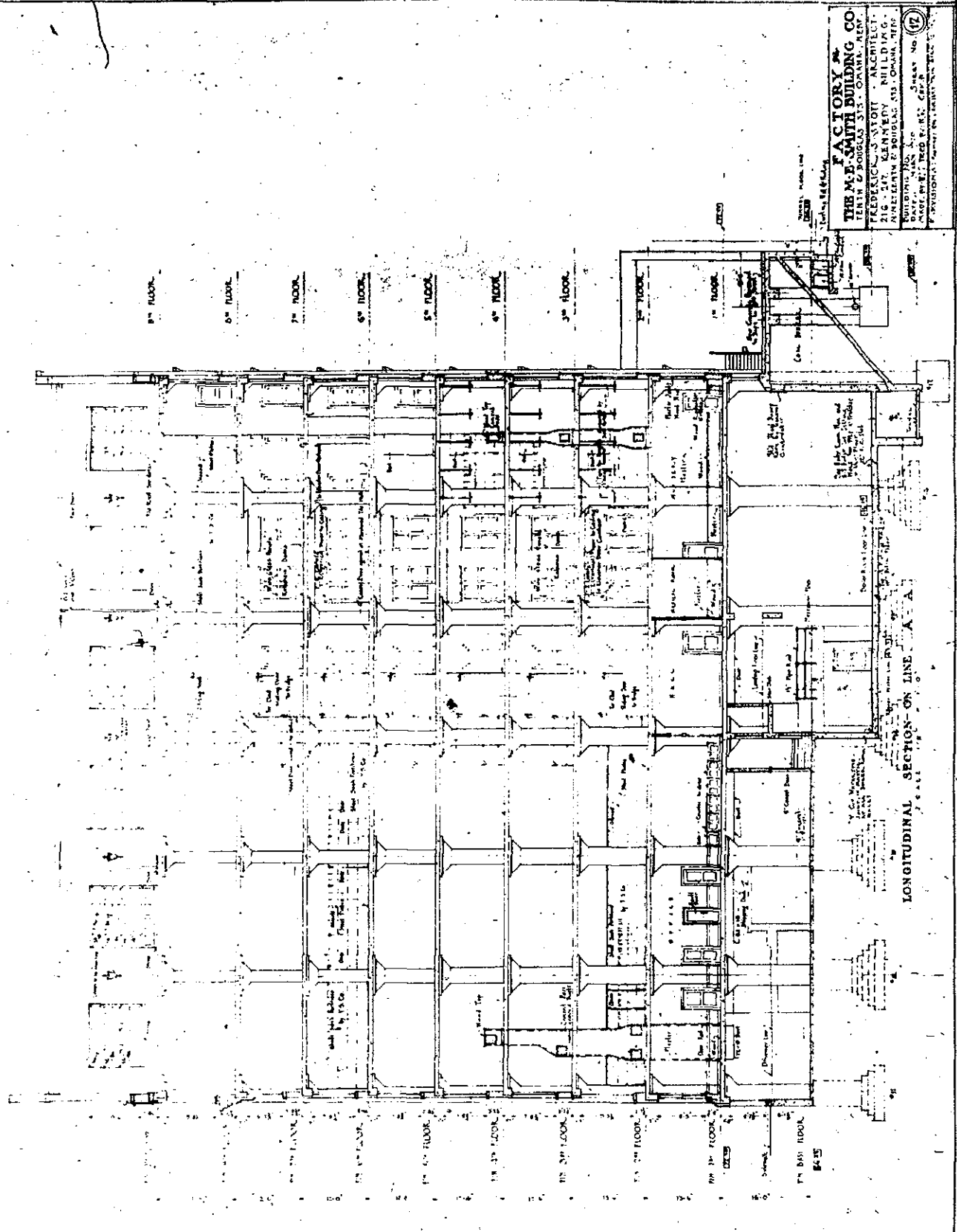




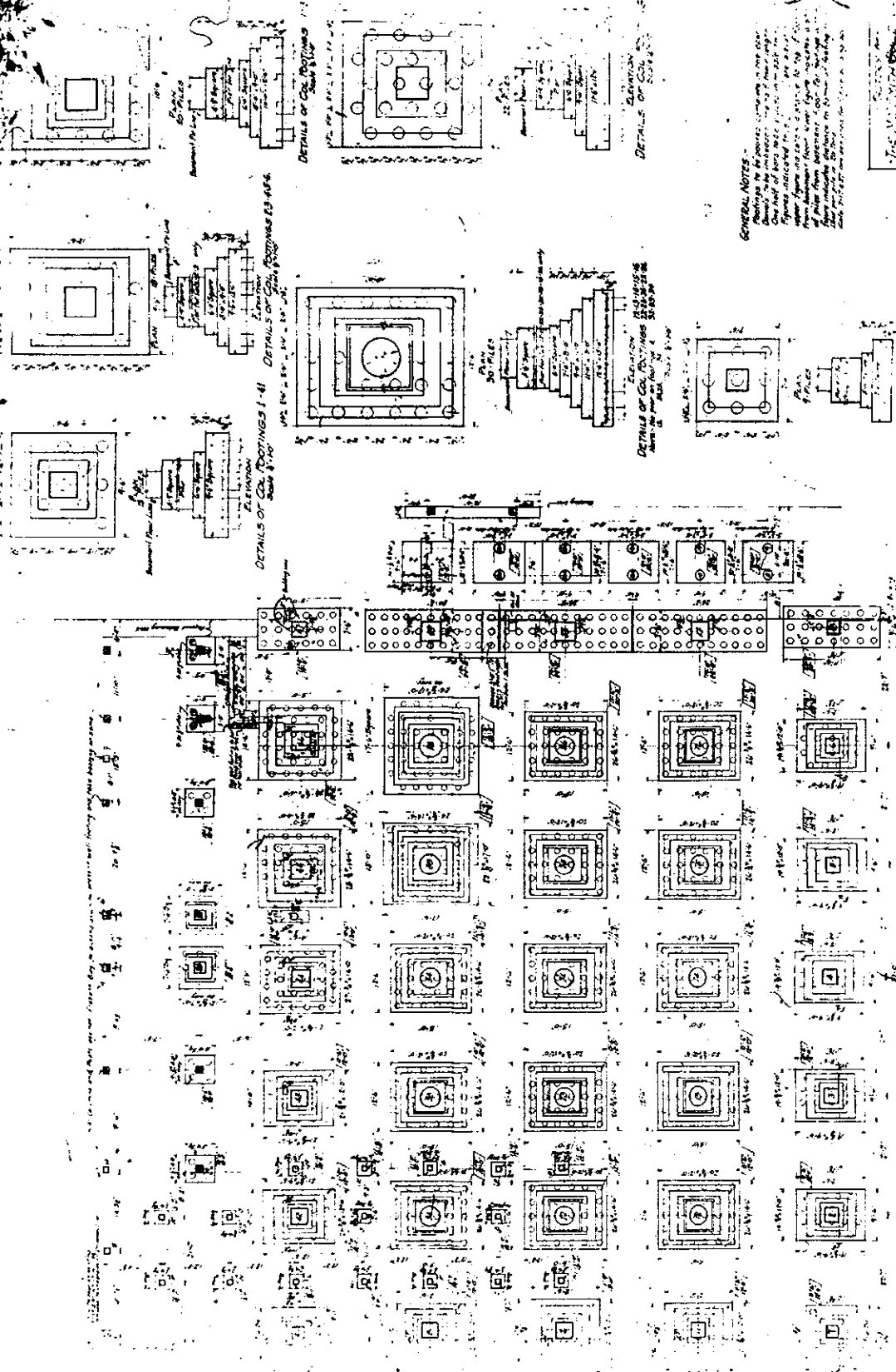
DOUGLAS ST. ELEVATION COURTESY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOP. DEPT., CITY OF OMAHA, NEB.



10th ST. ELEVATION COURTESY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVLOP. DEP'T., CITY OF OMAHA, NEB.



- LONGITUDINAL SECTION ON LINE A-A COURTESY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, CITY OF OMAHA, NEBRASKA



GENERAL NOTES -
 1. All dimensions are in feet and inches.
 2. All dimensions are to the center of the column unless otherwise noted.
 3. All dimensions are to the center of the footing unless otherwise noted.
 4. All dimensions are to the center of the column unless otherwise noted.
 5. All dimensions are to the center of the footing unless otherwise noted.

DETAILS OF COL. FOOTINGS 1-41

COLUMN FOOTING PLAN

DETAILS OF M.E. SMITH BUILDING COURTESY OF HOUSING AND CITY OF OMAHA
 COMMUNITY DEVELOP. DEPT.
 NEB.

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

The records were the result of an agreement between the City of Omaha and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in compliance with Executive Order 11593 as a mitigative effort in the redevelopment plan. The written documentation was prepared by the City of Omaha Planning Department. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the documentation in the winter of 1981-1982, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. The documentary photos were taken by Lynn Meyer of Omaha City Planning Department in February and March 1980.